BOARD OF DIRECTORS
STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2018

With contributions and input from:

Richard Rosenberg, Education
Consultant
Andrew Nachman, Strategic Planning Consultant

The Changing Environment of Sleep:

The face of healthcare and sleep medicine is changing, with trends including a movement toward patient-centered, integrated and accountable care. The sleep field continues to face the rising prevalence of ambulatory sleep testing, as well as the arrival of telemedicine. On the horizon is the potential for new diagnostic testing options and devices that could dramatically change the role of in lab sleep testing within the patient care continuum and likewise the role of the sleep technologist. Patient compliance with therapy of all types is becoming more critical to the success of the sleep center, and the technology available for compliance monitoring continues to advance.

The AAST board of directors believes that certain tasks and roles may evolve to become the responsibility of lower-cost staff such as medical assistants, while technologists will need to improve their skills, knowledge base and education. Additionally, the board believes the organization needs to consider expanding its constituency to include other roles within the sleep center, such as medical assistants (MA's), nurses and respiratory therapists. The board believes new roles may emerge within the sleep center, such as a "Sleep MA" or a "Sleep Therapist" and that it may be appropriate for the organization to provide education for those filling various roles in the sleep center. If the AAST addresses these changing dynamics, it will be well positioned to define these roles and the educational standards for achieving a level of certification for these roles.

The AAST has developed the 2017-2018 Strategic Plan to help guide the profession and association through this evolving and expanding field and to successfully navigate the changing landscape of sleep healthcare.

GOAL#1: Define who the AAST is and why it exists.

This goal will involve redefining the organizational identity of the AAST. The AAST needs to consider all of the potential stakeholders within a sleep center; technologists, MAs, nurses, physician assistants (PA's), respiratory therapists, medical billers and managers. The AAST will revisit and possibly redraft the Mission, Vision and Purpose statements to ensure they encompass all stakeholders.

Once all stakeholders are identified, the AAST will endeavor to define membership programs and service offerings targeted to each of the stakeholders it seeks to serve. This could include developing new membership categories and new ancillary products and services to meet the needs of all of its stakeholders.

GOAL#2: Recognize and define the various roles in a sleep program, the skills required and professional standards for each role within the context of the changing healthcare environment.

The AAST will continue to serve as the leader in defining the evolving role of the sleep technologist and to do so, it must recognize and define various new roles in a sleep program that could benefit from membership including medical assistants, respiratory therapists and even back office roles such as billing specialists and other administrative staff roles.

Once the first goal has been completed, and the AAST has been redefined, it must then identify the skills, education, experience and credentials that each of the various stakeholders require to succeed in their role in the sleep center. At the same time, the AAST must redefine the role of the sleep technologist within the sleep center. An expected outcome of this goal will be for the AAST to continue to develop guidelines, best practices, protocols and standards for sleep technologists and also for each of these newly defined roles within a sleep center, and build a credentials model and continuing education support for each of the various stakeholders.

GOAL#3: Evolve the AAST from a people-driven organization to a process-driven organization.

Organizations have three critical sets of resources: people, processes and technology. Currently, the AAST is highly reliant on the people that serve in key roles in the organization. By developing processes and utilizing updated technology, the AAST volunteer leaders will be able hand-off many of their initiatives to its management company staff to handle. The present time requirement needed by volunteer leaders is not sustainable for the organization and doesn't adequately support the spirit of volunteerism. This goal will require investment in project management resources and technology.

As an integral part of achieving this goal, the AAST plans to launch a leadership development project that will seek to bring in new technologists and other resources to share in the vision and passion of the AAST, and who can develop into the future leaders of the AAST.

GOAL#4: Continue to improve communication with AAST stakeholders, including identifying how to best communicate with newly included stakeholders identified in GOAL#1.

This goal was a previous goal set by the AAST, and great strides have been made over the past year. This is a continuing goal of the organization, with a renewed importance given the changing role of the AAST and its stakeholders. The AAST must communicate with its stakeholders in a way that maintains relevance for its traditional membership (sleep technologists) while earning the interest and building relevance for other identified stakeholders.

An integral step in achieving this goal is hiring a Marketing Agency or Content Marketing resource to work closely with the AAST's management company and leadership to develop and disseminate communications to all stakeholders.

GOAL#5: Expand the membership base of the AAST.

To achieve this goal, many of the prior goals will need to be completed or in process. Once the AAST redefines itself and its stakeholders, and develops the educational content and best practices for all roles within the sleep center, it will be positioned to expand the membership of the organization to include these stakeholders.

Integral to meeting this goal will be to research and develop new membership programs to address the needs of these new stakeholders. It may also be appropriate to develop a corporate or institutional membership program for employers to make available to employees in these roles. The board may also look toward developing an industry membership program to expand the membership base and strengthen support from manufacturers and other industry partners.

Plan Implementation:

The AAST Board of Directors has developed a tactical plan to achieve the goals outlined in this strategic plan. The tactical plan identifies specific projects to be undertaken in order to meet the goals as well as the resources and timelines necessary to complete the plan. The tactical plan will also identify the deliverables necessary to meet the project objectives and further identify metrics on which to measure the success of the project.